

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for use in a computer system for responding to received electronic messages, the method comprising:

upon receipt of an incoming electronic message in a computer system, selecting a first meta information from a plurality of meta information portions based on information retrieved from the incoming electronic message, wherein each meta information includes a rule and a fact attribute identified by the rule, wherein:

the fact attribute specifies a pre-selected class of stored fact information that is associated with the incoming electronic message, wherein stored fact information is external to the incoming electronic message, and

the rule is associated with an action performed by the computer system with regard to the incoming electronic message when the rule is met by the pre-selected class of stored fact information specified by the fact attribute;

accessing fact attributes within the incoming electronic message and comparing the fact attributes with at least the first meta information of the plurality of meta information portions stored in the computer system, the first meta information including a first rule and a first fact attribute to determine;

determining a first pre-selected class of a plurality of classes of stored fact information from the first fact attribute and a first service of a plurality of services from the first fact attribute, wherein the first service is specified by the first fact attribute and includes executable instructions for retrieving at least a first portion of the first pre-selected class of stored fact information;

retrieving [[a]] at least the first portion of the stored fact information that is a member of the first pre-selected class using the first service; and

storing the first retrieved portion of the stored fact information in [[an]] a markup language formatted electronic file that is associated with the incoming electronic message such that [[a]] ~~the first rule is for processing the incoming electronic message can be~~ applied to the first retrieved portion.

2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the first portion of the stored fact information is retrieved when there is a need to apply the rule.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the computer system includes a workflow for processing the incoming electronic message and wherein the method further comprises providing the electronic file with a lifetime bound to the workflow.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the electronic file is an XML document and the retrieved portion is stored in the XML document using an XSL transaction.

5. (Canceled).

6. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 [[5]], further comprising performing an initial screening of the incoming electronic message before accessing the meta information, wherein a result of the initial screening is used to select the first rule from a plurality of rules.

7. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 [[5]], wherein the meta information further includes an identifier specifying where the retrieved first portion of stored fact information is to be stored in the electronic file, and wherein the identifier is used in storing the retrieved first portion.

8. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 7, further comprising using the identifier to access the retrieved first portion of stored fact information in the electronic file to apply the first rule to the retrieved first portion.

9. (Original) The method of claim 7, wherein the identifier is an XPath query.

10. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the retrieved first portion of the stored fact information pertains to at least one category selected from the group consisting of: a business context of the incoming electronic message, analytical data relating to the incoming electronic message, availability of a person for attending to the incoming electronic message, a skill of a person for attending to the incoming electronic message, communication information relating to the incoming electronic message, an industry with which the incoming electronic message is associated, and combinations thereof.

11. (Currently Amended) A computer program product tangibly embodied in a computer readable storage medium and containing executable instructions that when executed cause a processor to perform operations comprising:

upon receipt of an incoming electronic message in a computer system, selecting a first meta information from a plurality of meta information portions based on information retrieved from the incoming electronic message, wherein each meta information includes a rule and a fact attribute identified by the rule, wherein:

the fact attribute specifies a pre-selected class of stored fact information that is associated with the incoming electronic message, wherein stored fact information is external to the incoming electronic message, and

the rule is associated with an action performed by the computer system with regard to the incoming electronic message when the rule is met by the pre-selected class of stored fact information specified by the fact attribute;

accessing fact attributes within the incoming electronic message and comparing the fact attributes with the first meta information stored in the computer system to determine, the first meta information including a first rule and a first fact attribute;

determining a first pre-selected class of a plurality of classes of stored fact information from the first fact attribute and a first service of a plurality of services from the first fact attribute, wherein the first service is specified by the first fact attribute and includes executable

instructions for retrieving at least a first portion of the first pre-selected class of stored fact information;

retrieving [[a]] at least the first portion of the stored fact information that is a member of the first pre-selected class using the first service; and

storing the first retrieved portion of the stored fact information in [[an]] a markup language formatted electronic file that is associated with the incoming electronic message such that [[a]] the first rule is for processing the incoming electronic message can be applied to the first retrieved portion.

12. (Currently Amended) The computer program product of claim 11, wherein the first portion of the stored fact information is retrieved when there is a need to apply the rule.

13. (Previously presented) The computer program product of claim 11, wherein the computer system includes a workflow for processing the incoming electronic message, and wherein the operations further comprise:

providing the electronic file with a lifetime bound to the workflow.

14. (Currently Amended) The computer program product of claim 11, ~~wherein the meta information includes the rule and a fact attribute identified by the rule, the fact attribute identifying the first pre-selected class of stored fact information, and wherein accessing the meta information comprises accessing the rule and the fact attribute;~~ the operations further comprising:

performing an initial screening of the incoming electronic message before accessing first the meta information; and

using a result of the initial screening to select the first rule from a plurality of rules.

15. (Currently Amended) A computer system comprising:

an electronic messaging system in which an incoming electronic message is received;
a first repository with stored fact information;

a second repository with meta information that identifies a first pre-selected class of a plurality of classes of the stored fact information; and

a program product tangibly embodied in a computer readable storage medium and including executable instructions that when executed cause the computer system, upon receipt of the incoming electronic message, 1) to select a first meta information from a plurality of meta information portions based on information retrieved from the incoming electronic message, wherein each meta information includes a rule and a fact attribute identified by the rule, wherein the fact attribute specifies a pre-selected class of stored fact information that is associated with the incoming electronic message, wherein stored fact information is external to the incoming electronic message, and the rule is associated with an action performed by the computer system with regard to the incoming electronic message when the rule is met by the pre-selected class of stored fact information specified by the fact attribute, 2) ~~to access fact attributes within the incoming electronic message and compare the fact attributes with the first meta information in the second repository, the first meta information including a first rule and a first fact attribute,~~ 3) ~~to determine~~ determining the first pre-selected class of a plurality of classes of stored fact information from the first fact attribute and a first service of a plurality of services from the first fact attribute, wherein the first service is specified by the first fact attribute and includes executable instructions for retrieving at least a first portion of the first pre-selected class of stored fact information, 2) ~~to use the meta information~~ 4) to retrieve [[a]] at least the first portion of the stored fact information from the first repository using the first service, the retrieved portion being a member of the first pre-selected class, and [[3]] 5) to store the first retrieved portion in [[an]] a markup language formatted electronic file that is associated with the incoming electronic message such that [[a]] the first rule for processing the incoming electronic message can be is applied to the first retrieved portion.

16. (Currently Amended) The computer system of claim 15, wherein the executable instructions further cause the computer system to retrieve the first portion of the stored fact information when there is a need to apply the rule.

17. (Original) The computer system of claim 15, further comprising a workflow for processing the incoming electronic message, wherein the electronic file has a lifetime bound to the workflow.

18. (Original) The computer system of claim 15, wherein the electronic file is an XML document and the retrieved portion is stored in the XML document using an XSL transaction.

19. (Canceled)

20. (Currently Amended) The computer system of claim 15 [[19]], wherein the meta information further includes an identifier specifying where the retrieved first portion of stored fact information is to be stored in the electronic file, and wherein the executable instructions cause the computer system to use the identifier in storing the retrieved first portion.

21. (Currently Amended) The computer system of claim 20, wherein the executable instructions cause the computer system to use the identifier in accessing the retrieved first portion of stored fact information to apply the first rule to the retrieved portion.

22. (Original) The computer system of claim 20, wherein the identifier is an XPath query.

23. (Withdrawn) A method of configuring a computer system for responding to received electronic messages, the method comprising:

receiving an input in a computer system, the input identifying a first user-selected class of a plurality of classes of stored fact information to be retrieved upon receipt in the computer system of at least one incoming electronic message; and

storing, in a repository that is accessed upon receipt of the incoming electronic message, meta information that identifies the first user-selected class such that a portion of the stored fact

information that is a member of the first user-selected class can be retrieved upon accessing the meta information.

24. (Withdrawn) A computer program product containing executable instructions that when executed cause a processor to perform operations comprising:

receive an input in a computer system, the input identifying a first user-selected class of a plurality of classes of stored fact information to be retrieved upon receipt in the computer system of at least one incoming electronic message; and

store, in a repository that is accessed upon receipt of the incoming electronic message, meta information that identifies the first user-selected class such that a portion of the stored fact information that is a member of the first user-selected class can be retrieved upon accessing the meta information.